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Tapura arachnoidea (*Dichapetalaceae*) a new species from Gabon

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Summary : *Tapura arachnoidea*, a new species from Gabon, is described and illustrated. Of the 7 African species of this genus 6 occur in Gabon which stresses once again its importance as a centre of biodiversity. The *Tapura* sp. of the Flore du Gabon has been identified.

Résumé : *Tapura arachnoidea*, une espèce nouvelle du Gabon, est décrite et illustrée. Des 7 espèces africaines du genre, 6 sont présentes au Gabon, ce qui accentue son importance comme centre de biodiversité. Le *Tapura* sp. de la Flore du Gabon a été identifié.

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The Lastoursville region of Gabon, though relatively well explored by LE TESTU (BRETELER, 1990), has nevertheless yielded a new species of *Tapura* recently collected for the first time. The botanical inventory of this country is thus far from complete, and its importance in terms of biodiversity can only be properly understood after much more exploratory work.

***Tapura arachnoidea* Breteler, sp. nov. — Fig. 1.**

Tapura neglecta N. Hallé & Heine *affinis*, sed *praesertim differt foliis majoribus nervis lateralibus instructis, floribus majoribus circulo pilorum in tubo ornatis et staminodio annuliformi cupulatoque ad infimum pistilli munitis.*

TYPE : *Breteler, Jongkind & Wieringa 11165*, Gabon, ca. 30 km E. of Lastoursville, ca. 0°40'S, 13°00'E, 29.IV.1992, fl., fr. (holo-, WAG ; iso-, BR, C, COI, EA, HBG, K, LBV, MA, MO, P).

Shrub or treelet up to 2.5 m tall. Branchlets subappressed-greyish-short-hairy ; branches hairy as branchlets glabrescent with age. Stipules narrowly triangular, 1-4 mm long, hairy as branchlets. Petiole subterete, grooved to canaliculate above, (3-)4-10(-15) mm long, hairy as branchlets ; blade papery to thinly coriaceous, oblong-elliptic to obovate, (12-)14-20(-22) × (3-)4-8(-10) cm, 2-4.5 times as long as wide, cuneate to rounded at base, gradually to abruptly acuminate at apex, the acumen acute to obtuse, (0.5-)1-2.5(-3) cm long, glabrous above, the midrib slightly impressed, arachnoid beneath, the margin, the midrib and the (8-)9-10(-11) pairs of main laterals subappressed-grey-hairy, glabrescent with age, the arachnoid indumentum disappearing first, glands beneath only, small (≤ 0.3 mm diam.), crateriform, more or less in 2 rows, one at each side of the midrib, at sub-equal distance between margin and midrib or closer to the margin.

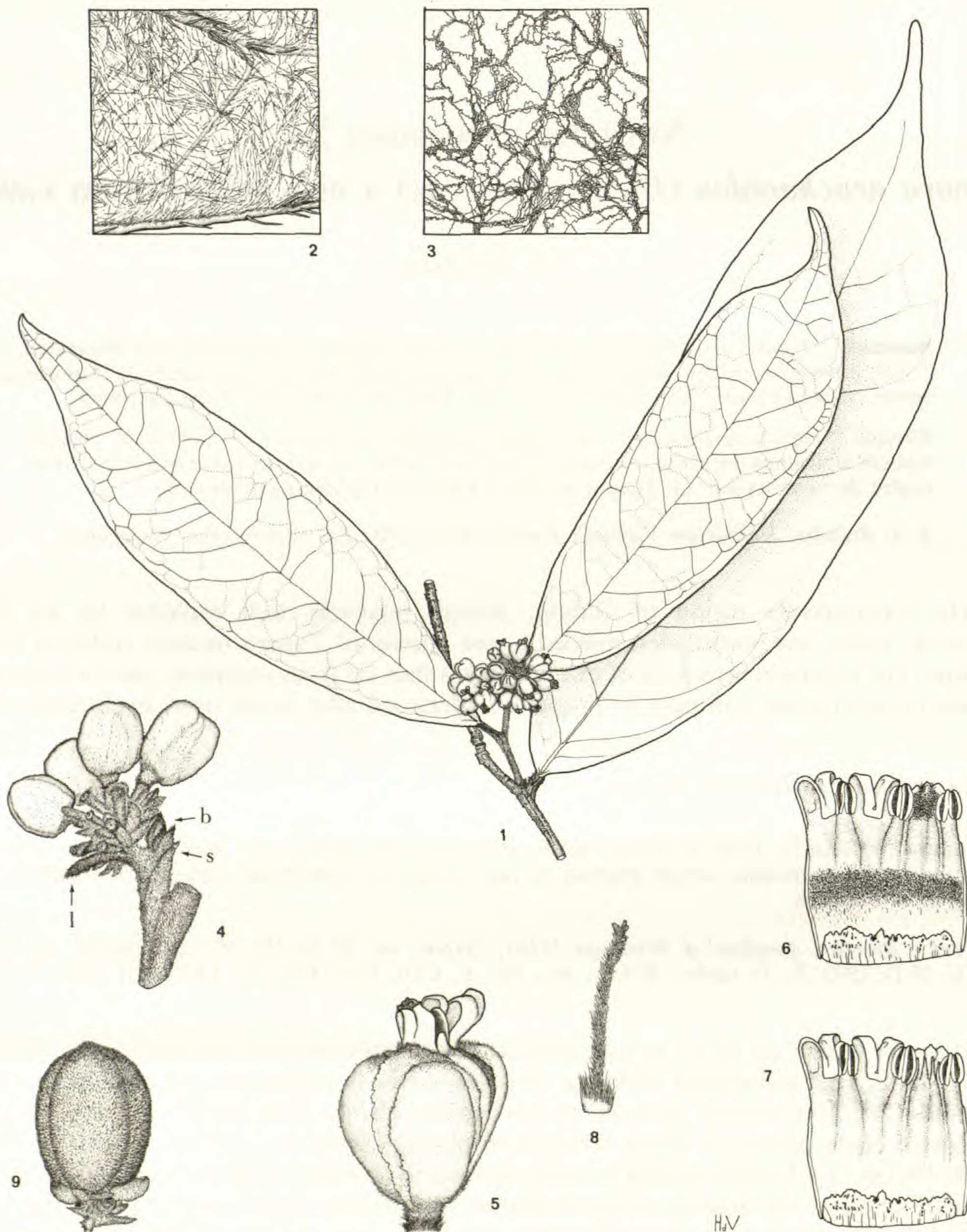


Fig. 1. — *Tapura arachnoidea* Breteler : 1, flowering branchlet $\times \frac{1}{2}$; 2, detail of leaf indumentum beneath $\times 4$; 3, as 2 $\times 20$; 4, top of branchlet with inflorescence $\times 2$ (l = reduced leaf ; b = terminal bud ; s = stipule) ; 5, flower $\times 4$; 6, staminal tube inside $\times 4$; 7, as 6, without indumentum $\times 4$; 8, pistil $\times 4$; 9, fruit $\times 1$. (Breteler et al. 11165). — Drawing by HANS DE VRIES.

Inflorescence a subsessile to very shortly stalked, indistinctly branched, axillary, subglobose head, at the end of the leafy shoot, seemingly terminal, up to ca. 20-flowered, hairy as branchlets ; peduncle up to 3 mm long, more or less adnate to the petiole of the supporting leaf which may have a strongly reduced blade (see Fig. 1, 4) ; bracts and bracteoles narrowly triangular to oblong, 1-2 mm long. Flowers 7-8 mm long, pedicel subappressed-short-hairy, 1-2 mm long, jointed, the upper part 0-0.5 mm long. Sepals subequal in length, erect, firmly appressed, thick, cucullate, elliptic-oblong in outline, 5-6 × 3-4 mm, arachnoid outside, glabrous inside. Petals 5, with the 5 stamens united into a ca. 4 mm long cylindrical tube, apical parts free, ca. 3 mm long, tube sparsely short-hairy outside, inside with a distinct ring of tomentose hairs above the ovary, the free parts glabrous except for the apex inside of the sterile stamens ; large petals 2, bicucullate apically, the 3 narrow petals with a sublanceolate entire apical part. Stamens 3 fertile, 2 without anther, the fertile ones very slightly shorter than the large petals, the two lateral ones at one side (proximal to narrow petals) provided with a small, hairy filiform lobe, anthers ca. 1 mm long, with a distinct connective, sterile stamens narrowly triangular to filiform apically. Basal staminodes united into a cup-shaped glabrous disc, 0.5-1 mm high, with entire or lobulate margin. Pistil 3-merous, as long as the stamens ; ovary 3-locular, velutinous, style completely subappressed-hairy, apically " attached " to the hairy apices of the sterile stamens ; lobes 3, ≤ 0.5 mm long, glabrous.

Fruit ellipsoid in outline, 1-3-seeded, lobed when more than 1-seeded, 1.8-2.2 × 1.4-1.7 cm, shortly velutinous ; mesocarp 1-2 mm thick ; endocarp firmly pergamentaceous, slightly rugose outside, smooth, glossy and glabrous inside. Seed ellipsoid, ca. 17 × 13 mm, testa brown, glossy.

HABITAT. — Rain forest.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED. — GABON : ca. 30 km E. of Lastoursville (fl., fr. April), *Breteler, Jongkind & Wieringa 11165* (BR, C, COI, EA, HBG, K, LBV, MA, MO, P, WAG), type ; *ibid.*, 11188 (BR, K, LBV, MA, MO, P, WAG).

Tapura arachnoidea is most closely related to *T. neglecta* N. Hallé & Heine from which it differs by its larger leaves with more lateral nerves and a distinct arachnoid indumentum beneath, its larger flowers with firmly appressed cucullate arachnoid sepals, its flower tube with a distinct hairy ring inside, and by an annular glabrous disc.

The *Tapura* sp. of the *Dichapetalaceae* in the Flore du Gabon (BRETILER, 1991 : 214) has been identified as belonging to *Thecacoris leptobotrya* (Müll. Arg.) Brenan of the *Euphorbiaceae*. With a minor change the key to the *Tapura* species in this Flora (p.196) can now be adapted to accommodate *Tapura arachnoidea* by changing the first 3 lines of the key as follows :

1. Pédoncule de l'inflorescence non ou à peine soudé au pétiole ou l'inflorescence sessile ou subsessile à l'aisselle de la feuille.
2. Feuilles avec (8-)9-10(-11) paires de nervures latérales *Tapura arachnoidea*

REFERENCES

- BRETILER, F. J., 1990. — Gabon's evergreen forest : the present status and its future. *Mitt. Inst. Allg. Bot. Hamburg* 23a : 219-224.
- BRETILER, F. J., 1991. — *Dichapetalaceae*. *Flore du Gabon* 32 : 1-221.